



## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket No. FRA-2020-0027-N-29]

#### Proposed Agency Information Collection Activities; Comment Request

**AGENCY:** Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

**ACTION:** Notice of information collection; request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), this notice announces that FRA is forwarding the Information Collection Request (ICR) abstracted below to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and comment. The ICR describes the information collection and its expected burden. On August 26, 2020, FRA published a notice providing a 60-day period for public comment on the ICR.

**DATES:** Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE **FEDERAL REGISTER**].

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments and recommendations for the proposed ICR should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to

[www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain](https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain). Find this particular ICR by selecting "Currently under 30-day Review - Open for Public Comments" or by using the search function.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Qiana Swayne, Information Collection Clearance Officer, Federal Railroad Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590 (telephone: (202) 493-0414) or [Qiana.Swayne@dot.gov](mailto:Qiana.Swayne@dot.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The PRA, 44 U.S.C. 3501–3520, and its implementing regulations, 5 CFR part 1320, require Federal agencies to issue two notices

seeking public comment on information collection activities before OMB may approve paperwork packages. *See* 44 U.S.C. 3506, 3507; 5 CFR 1320.8 through 1320.12. On August 26, 2020, FRA published a 60-day notice in the *Federal Register* soliciting comment on the ICR for which it is now seeking OMB approval. *See* 85 FR 52657. FRA received no comments in response to this 60-day notice.

Before OMB decides whether to approve the proposed collection of information, it must provide 30 days for public comment. Federal law requires OMB to approve or disapprove paperwork packages between 30 and 60 days after the 30-day notice is published. 44 U.S.C. 3507(b)–(c); 5 CFR 1320.10(b); *see also* 60 FR 44978, 44983, Aug. 29, 1995. OMB believes the 30-day notice informs the regulated community to file relevant comments and affords the agency adequate time to digest public comments before it renders a decision. 60 FR 44983, Aug. 29, 1995. Therefore, respondents should submit their respective comments to OMB within 30 days of publication to best ensure having their full effect.

*Comments are invited on the following ICR regarding:* (1) whether the information collection activities are necessary for FRA to properly execute its functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of FRA’s estimates of the burden of the information collection activities, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used to determine the estimates; (3) ways for FRA to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information being collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of information collection activities on the public, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

The summaries below describe the ICR that FRA will submit for OMB clearance as the PRA requires:

*Title:* Workforce Development Survey.

*OMB Control Number:* 2130-0621.

*Abstract:* FRA has statutory responsibility to ensure the safety of railroad operations under 49 U.S.C. 20103. To conduct safe railroad operations, the workforce must have the requisite knowledge and skills to operate equipment and utilize technologies. FRA therefore seeks to promote workforce development policy and standards to ensure the workforce has the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct safe railroad operations. Due to an increasingly dynamic and maturing workforce, combined with continual changes in knowledge and skills required to use new technologies, there is an increasing risk of not having the necessary talent pools to fill critical railroad operational positions.

Since 2011, FRA has routinely performed a comprehensive overview of the railroad industry workforce. The Railroad Industry Modal Profile was a response to the DOT National Transportation Workforce Development Initiative that required each DOT Operating Administration to produce an analysis of its industry workforce. The most recent published update in April 2016, Railroad Industry Modal Profile: An Outline of the Railroad Industry Workforce Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities, highlighted numerous workforce challenges including age, diversity, knowledge management and succession planning, work-life balance, recruitment, and the impact of evolving technology.

The prevailing workforce concerns during the early stages of the DOT National Transportation Workforce Development Initiative were the large number of retirement-eligible employees in transportation-related fields and the national shortage of science, technology, engineering, and math graduates. Because the railroad industry had done very little hiring in the late 1980s and throughout most of the 1990s, the retirement-eligible population became quite large, even beyond that of most other industries and transportation modes (each of which was also grappling with similar retirement population concerns).

These workforce challenges persist. Although the industry has recognized the need to focus on recruitment and retention strategies, it continues to face risks in maintaining a viable workforce and building a pipeline of diverse talent. To take effective and efficient action to minimize these risks, FRA requires reliable information on current workforce development challenges, strategies, and outcomes. Initial data collected for the Railroad Industry Modal Profile established a baseline understanding of the risks and status. However, to confirm and further develop the understanding of the risks, potential solutions, and best practices that have been implemented by railroad stakeholders, this revised survey is proposed. With this submission, FRA is requesting permission to gather the needed information about the railroad industry workforce.

*Type of Request:* Extension without Change.

*Affected Public:* Class I freight and passenger railroads, short line and regional railroads, labor unions, major associations, academia, and specialty experts.

*Form(s):* FRA F 240.

*Respondent Universe:* 847.

*Frequency of Submission:* One-time.

*Total Estimated Annual Responses:* 213.

*Total Estimated Annual Burden:* 88.75 hours.

*Total Estimated Annual Burden Hour Dollar Cost Equivalent:* \$3,637.86.

Under 44 U.S.C. 3507(a) and 5 CFR 1320.5(b) and 1320.8(b)(3)(vi), FRA informs all interested parties that a respondent is not required to respond to, conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Authority:** 44 U.S.C. 3501–3520.

**Brett A. Jortland,**

*Deputy Chief Counsel.*

[FR Doc. 2020-25916 Filed: 11/23/2020 8:45 am; Publication Date: 11/24/2020]